

# THE GARBAGE STORY

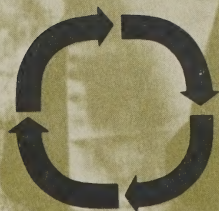
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Resource Recovery







# IT'S EARLY MORNING, GARBAGE COLLECTION DAY, 25 YEARS AGO.

Picture an average Ontario street. In front of every home is a single garbage can. A few homes have two cans.

But look up that same street today. Three, four, perhaps six big containers. Cans, plastic bags, cardboard boxes – all stuffed with refuse.

Then consider this fact: the population of our province has almost doubled in the past 25 years.

Twice as many people are pouring out about four times as much garbage. And it's not going to lessen, it's going to increase.

That massive pile of garbage raises a single question:

## WHAT TO DO WITH IT?

Refuse has a number of annoying qualities. One is that it won't just disappear, even after it leaves your front door.

What to do with the tons of waste collected each day from town and city streets?

What about wastes from commercial stores: department, variety and the like? Did you ever look behind a super-market?

What about the thousands of autos abandoned every year?

The trouble is we're a throw-away society. We deliberately make things so they won't last, then turn right around and buy new things that won't last either. We're marvellous at producing, but what do we do with the product?

Until 1970 most of Ontario's waste products were disposed of by a method used in the middle ages – taking it by the truckload to an out-of-the-way spot and dumping it.

It's simple and it's cheap, but hardly satisfactory from a public health or environmental point of view. It blew around. It caught fire. But the flies and rats loved it.

# **TIMES HAVE CHANGED.**

Since Ontario assumed responsibility for waste management in 1970, open dumps have virtually disappeared. For a few urban communities, the answer to waste disposal has been incineration – burning garbage in special combustion chambers with rigid controls to collect the fumes and particulate matter which would otherwise pollute the air.

But for most Ontario communities the new answer to waste disposal was sanitary landfill – a sophisticated engineering project placing waste where it will not threaten water quality above or below ground, covering it daily, and restoring a finished landfill site for use as a park, a golf course or a playing field.

We're still learning. We know disposal is not the right answer. Waste disposal by incineration or sanitary landfill may be clean and safe.

But it's still waste.

# **WASTE IS A RESOURCE.**

Municipal refuse contains metals – iron, copper and aluminum, to name a few. It contains paper. It contains plastic. It contains glass and a wide range of organic and inorganic material.

All these materials are resources – energy or material resources which can be reclaimed and used. Resources are too valuable and too limited in supply to be thrown away. This is the basic principle behind Ontario's Resource Recovery Program – a multi-million-dollar fifteen-year plan to take the waste out of waste management.

Ontario is the first jurisdiction in the world to make such a total commitment to resource recovery.



# BUT HOW DOES IT WORK?

Waste begins with production – manufacture of products and packages designed to be used and thrown away – everything from disposable diapers to disposable cars. But consume and discard are watchwords, not just for the sake of efficient production but also for our personal convenience. Because of the steady increase in waste production, our conveniences have become a liability.

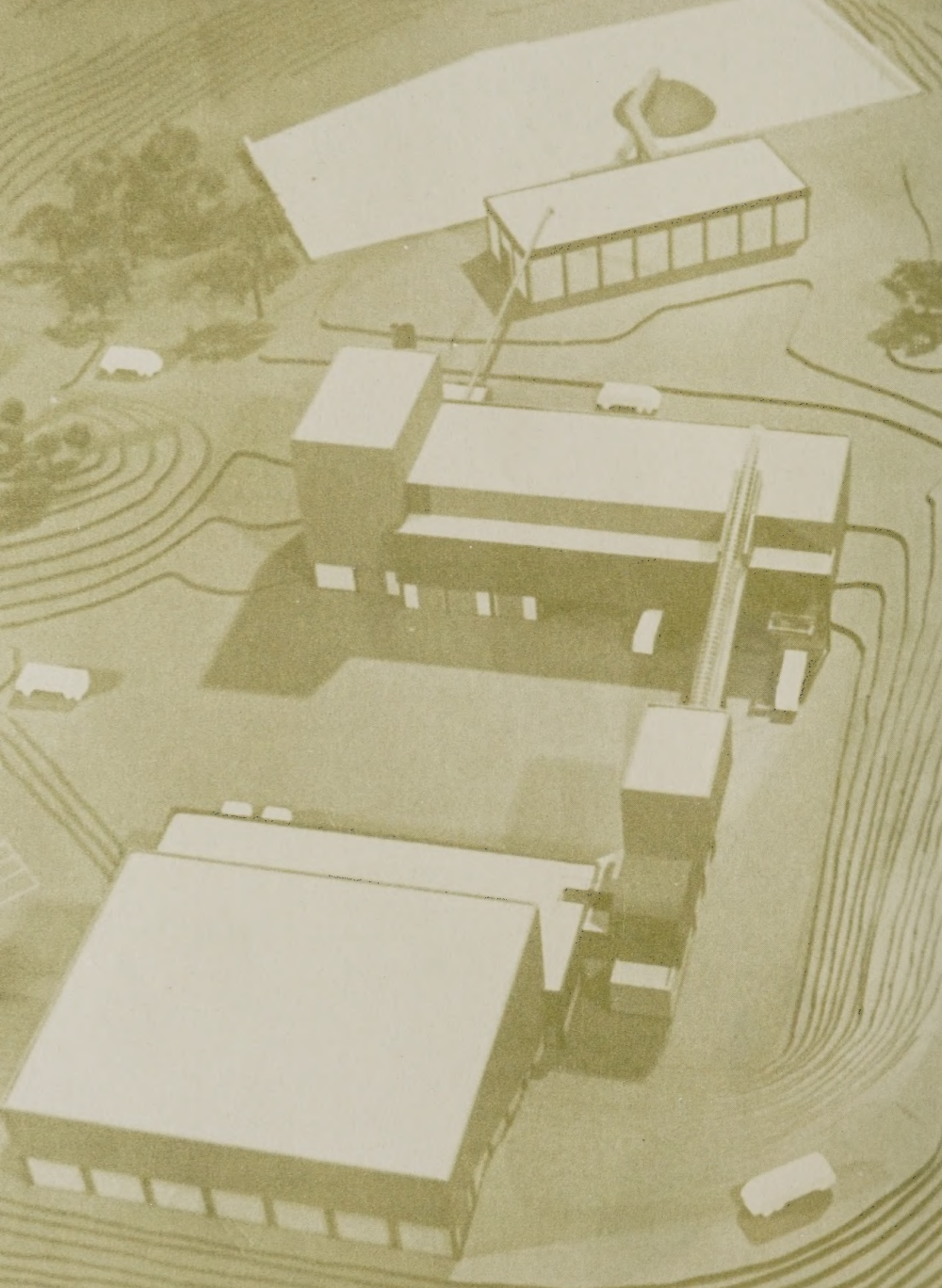
Sometimes direct government action is the only answer. Regulations were introduced under The Environmental Protection Act to ban throw-away three-quart plastic and paper milk containers. More often, the best solution is to help producers and consumers realize the environmental evils of conveniences such as throw-away soft drink containers, and solve these problems without government compulsion. If we care about waste, this is where we as individuals can do the most good – by choosing to buy returnable, reuseable or repairable goods and packages – and insisting on getting them.

Environment Ontario's Resource Recovery Program plays a direct role in the next level of the waste problem. Provincial financing is available for area waste management planning to develop large-scale efficient collection and transportation systems for garbage.

This area planning develops the collection, transportation and transfer systems which feed Ontario's garbage into resource recovery plants being built by Environment Ontario across the province.

At first, these plants incorporate primary reclamation processes. Ferrous metals, bundled newsprint and corrugated paper will be the first products on the market from resource recovery. And the processing of the remaining waste at these plants makes its disposal nuisance free.

More advanced reclamation techniques are being developed at an experimental plant for resource recovery in Metropolitan Toronto.



***Ontario's new experimental plant for Resource Recovery is an operational reclamation plant and a laboratory for pioneering resource recovery methods and processes.***



This plant is, in effect, a research laboratory where the province will work out efficient, economical means to change waste into new products. At the same time, government and industry are already working together to develop and improve markets for reclaimed materials. As new processes are refined and new markets are established, the advanced reclamation methods developed in the experimental plant will be installed in the resource recovery plants across the province to make them increasingly sophisticated and to steadily improve their capacity to reclaim resources from garbage.

## **SUMMING IT ALL UP...**

Ontario's Resource Recovery Program takes a comprehensive approach to all aspects of the waste problem – not just the construction of reclamation plants but the complete cycle of production, consumption, collection, transportation, processing and recovery.

And because Resource Recovery attacks the waste of material and energy resources, this program is linked with, and part of, the Ontario Government's Energy Management Program to moderate by one-third our ever-increasing rate of growth in energy consumption.

Our energy and material resources are not unlimited. They must be conserved.

But it needs more than government action to make this exciting program work.

It's up to us, as consumers and concerned citizens, to support it.

**It's in your hands. Don't throw it away.**

VF

For further information:

Information Services Branch,  
Ontario Ministry of the Environment,  
135 St. Clair Avenue West,  
Toronto M4V 1P5

It's in your hands. Don't throw it away.



Ministry  
of the  
Environment

Environment Ontario's Waste Management/Resource Recovery program is linked to the Ontario Energy Management Program co-ordinated by the Ministry of Energy.